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C O N F I D E N T I A L AIT TAIPEI 002765

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/14/2031  
TAGS: [PGOV TW](#)  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT CHEN'S PREEMPTIVE DEFENSE AGAINST SHIH  
MING-TE'S CAMPAIGN TO OUST HIM

REF: TAIPEI 2743

CLASSIFIED BY: AIT DIRECTOR STEPHEN M. YOUNG, REASONS: 1.4 (B/D)

¶1. (C) IN A MOVE SEEMINGLY TIMED TO PREEMPT HIS DETRACTORS, PRESIDENT CHEN DELIVERED A HIGHLY POLITICAL SPEECH TO SUPPORTERS SATURDAY MORNING AUGUST 12 AT THE KETAGALAN INSTITUTE, AN ORGANIZATION HE FOUNDED IN 2003 TO PROMOTE HIS DEMOCRATIC AGENDA. APPEARING IN CONTROL, CONFIDENT, AND SERIOUS THROUGHOUT THE APPROXIMATELY 45-MINUTE TELEVISED SPEECH, CHEN DEFENDED HIS STAYING IN OFFICE, ARGUING THAT ANY QUESTIONS SHOULD BE SETTLED THROUGH CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL PROCESSES AND STRESSING HIS WISH TO "BEAR THE CROSS OF TAIWAN HISTORY" IN PROMOTING CONSTITUTIONAL AND OTHER REFORMS DURING HIS REMAINING TWO YEARS.

¶2. (C) ONCE AGAIN APPEALING TO HIS DEEP GREEN BASE AND ALSO PLAYING THE ETHNIC CARD, CHEN RAISED THE "NATIONAL IDENTITY" ISSUE BY CITING THE STATEMENT THAT SOME MAINLANDERS FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE IF CALLED TAIWANESE, WHICH WAS INCLUDED IN A NEW COMMERCIALLY PUBLISHED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TAIPEI CITY GUIDEBOOK. CHEN WAS IMPLICITLY ATTACKING KUOMINTANG CHAIRMAN MA YING-JEOU, WHO HAD WRITTEN A PREFACE FOR THE GUIDEBOOK. CHEN ALSO RAISED OTHER DIVISIVE ISSUES, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF CHANGING THE NAME OF A MEMORIAL AND AN AIRPORT NAMED FOR CHIANG KAI-SHEK. IN DEFENDING HIMSELF AGAINST CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS, CHEN ATTRIBUTED CONTROVERSIES ABOUT POSSIBLE MISUSE OF CONFIDENTIAL PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE FUNDS TO THE DIFFICULTIES OF DEALING WITH AFTER-EFFECTS OF TRANSITION FROM AN AUTHORITARIAN TO A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

¶3. (SBU) WAITING UNTIL CHEN HAD FINISHED HIS SPEECH, SHIH MING-TE DELIVERED A TEN-MINUTE HIGHLY EMOTIONAL ADDRESS TO A RELATIVELY SMALL CROWD AT THE MEMORIAL TO THE FEBRUARY 28, 1947 INCIDENT UNDER A SIGN THAT READ "ONE MILLION PEOPLE OUST CHEN." SHIH'S BASIC MESSAGE WAS ENCAPSULATED IN A SHORT SLOGAN: "THERE IS ONLY BLACK AND WHITE, NO DIVISION BETWEEN BLUE AND GREEN; AH-BIAN (CHEN SHUI-BIAN) STEP DOWN."

APPEARING ON A TALK SHOW SATURDAY EVENING, SHIH EXPLAINED THAT THE ALLEGATIONS ABOUT MISUSE OF PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE FUNDS HAD CONVINCED HIM TO LAUNCH THE CAMPAIGN TO OUST CHEN. IF SHIH CAN REACH HIS GOAL OF RECRUITING ONE MILLION SUPPORTERS BY SEPTEMBER 9, HE PLANS TO LEAD A MONTH-LONG ROUND THE CLOCK SILENT PROTEST OUTSIDE THE PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE TO PRESSURE CHEN TO STEP DOWN. SHIH SAID HE HAD

ALREADY APPLIED FOR DEMONSTRATION PERMITS FOR THE ENTIRE MONTH-LONG PERIOD.

14. (C) SO FAR, SOME SMALL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE COME OUT IN SUPPORT OF SHIH, INCLUDING A LAWYERS GROUP AND THE DEMOCRATIC ACTION ALLIANCE (DAA). HOWEVER, CHEN SUPPORTERS CHASED A SMALL DAA GROUP OUT OF A TEMPLE IN TAINAN AS THEY TRIED TO BEGIN A PROTEST CAMPAIGN ON SATURDAY. IN ADDITION, OVER RECENT DAYS, A NUMBER OF POLITICAL FIGURES FROM CHEN'S DEMOCRATIC PROGRESSIVE PARTY (DPP) AND THE DEEP GREEN MOVEMENT HAVE STRONGLY ATTACKED SHIH AND HIS CAMPAIGN, AN INDICATION OF THEIR DETERMINATION TO HOLD ON TO GREEN CAMP SUPPORTERS.

15. (C) OVER THE WEEKEND, FORMER PRESIDENT LEE TENG-HUI PARTICIPATED IN A SERIES OF EVENTS IN KAOHSIUNG IN CONNECTION WITH THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE TAIWAN SOLIDARITY UNION (TSU). FOR THE FIRST TIME, PRESIDENT CHEN WAS NOT INVITED TO JOIN LEE AT THE TSU ANNIVERSARY, AND LEE ALSO SAID HE HAD NO INTENTION OF MEETING WITH CHEN. LEE MILDLY CRITICIZED CHEN FOR ALLOWING CORRUPTION BY THOSE CLOSE TO HIM, BUT SAID IT WAS UP TO CHEN TO DECIDE WHETHER TO STAY ON OR STEP DOWN AND THAT HE WAS NOT TAKING A POSITION ON THE QUESTION. ALSO, LEE STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE DPP FOR PROMOTING GREATER ECONOMIC OPENING TOWARD THE PRC, AN ATTACK SQUARELY AIMED AT PREMIER SU TSENG-CHANG, THE CURRENT FAVORITE TO GAIN THE DPP PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION IN 2008.

COMMENT

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16. (C) AT THIS VERY EARLY STAGE, SHIH'S CAMPAIGN APPEARS WEAK AMONG GREEN SUPPORTERS COMPARED TO THE POWER POSSESSED BY CHEN AND HIS SUPPORTERS. SHIH MAY GAIN SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT FROM THE BLUE CAMP, BUT FOR HIS CAMPAIGN TO BE EFFECTIVE, HE WILL HAVE TO WIN VERY SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FROM THE GREEN SIDE. THIS MAY PROVE DIFFICULT, GIVEN TOUGH

RESISTANCE BY CHEN AND THE FORCES ALLIED WITH HIM.  
YOUNG